

REMARKS

Applicant submits amended claims in response to the rejection by the Board under 37 C.F.R. 1.196(b). As Applicant is amending some of the claims in a manner to address the rejection based upon the *Gschwendtner* reference, Applicant submits a Request for Continued Examination.

Applicant has amended the claims in a manner to address the Board's concerns regarding the "encloses" language previously presented in claims 14, 19 and 21. Applicant respectfully submits that the claim language is clear and that the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112 are satisfied.

Applicant also respectfully submits that the rejection based on the *Gschwendtner* reference no longer applies to the claims. The clarified recitations regarding the continuous, unbroken surface are in accordance with the Board's observations when analyzing the scope of the claims relevant to the *Gschwendtner* reference. The passage openings in the *Gschwendtner* reference make it impossible for that reference to anticipate the claims. Similarly, none of the claims can be considered obvious.

Applicant respectfully submits that this case is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference will facilitate moving this case forward to being issued, Applicant's representative is happy to discuss any issues regarding this application. Applicant's representative can be contacted at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS

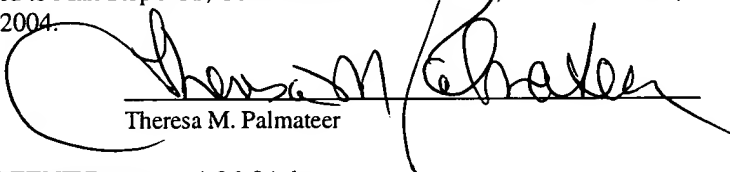


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Dated: April 26, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the enclosed **Response** is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 26, 2004.



Theresa M. Palmateer

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